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Cont'd

SSC, 0.5% SDS 68°C, or an allelic variant of said sequences, which method employs a first nucleic acid molecule of any one of claims 11 to 15.

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17. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 16 comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a preparation of nucleic acid,
- (b) providing said first nucleic acid molecule,
- (c) contacting nucleic acid in said preparation with said nucleic acid molecule under conditions for hybridization,
- (d) identifying said SPASIC variant if present by its hybridization with said nucleic acid molecule.

18. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 16 comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a preparation of nucleic acid,
- (b) providing a pair of nucleic acid molecule primers suitable for PCR, at least one said primers being said first nucleic acid molecule,
- (c) contacting nucleic acid in said preparation with said primers under conditions for performance of PCR,
- (d) performing PCR and determining the presence or absence of an amplified PCR product.

19. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 17 wherein the nucleic acid preparation is derived from dorsal root ganglia or spinal cord.

20. (Amended) A method of producing a derivative nucleic acid according to claim 7, which method comprises the step of modifying a nucleic acid comprising Seq ID No 1.

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31. (Amended) A method of influencing the electrophysiological and/or pharmacological properties of a cell, said method comprising the step of causing or allowing expression of a heterologous nucleic acid of all or part of the nucleic acid of claim 10 to reduce the activity by an anti-sense mechanism.

32. (Amended) A transgenic non-human mammal, comprising a cell of claim 24.

33. (Amended) A method for identifying a substance having ion-channel modulating activity, the method comprising the use of any of the protein of any one of claims 1 or 2.

34. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 33 comprising the steps of: (i) exposing the protein, which is associated with a membrane or cell surface, to a solution of the substance such as to allow interaction between the substance and the protein, (ii) measuring the electrophysiological response of the cell or membrane to this interaction.

35 (Amended) A method as claim in claim 33 for screening for potential analgesics; neuromodulatory agents; anti-inflammatory agents; agents that regulate neurotransmitter release or neuronal excitability.

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38. (Amended) Nucleic acid of claim 5, or vector containing the same, for use in gene therapy, or for use in the preparation of a medicament for use in gene therapy.

39. (Amended) The nucleic acid or vector of claim 38 wherein the therapy comprises the step of inhibiting a pain response and/or altering neurotransmitter release.

Add the following claims:

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--40. (new) A nucleic acid as claimed in claim 8 which is an allelic variant.

41. (new) A method as claimed in claim 18 wherein the nucleic acid preparation is derived from dorsal root ganglia or spinal cord.

42. (new) A method of producing a derivative nucleic acid according to claim 8, which method comprises the step of modifying a nucleic acid comprising Seq ID No 1.

43. (new) A method of influencing the electrophysiological and/or pharmacological properties of a cell, said method comprising the step of causing or allowing expression of a heterologous nucleic acid of part of the nucleic acid of claim 5 to reduce activity by co-suppression, or a ribozyme specific for a said nucleic acid.

44. (new) A method for identifying a substance having ion-channel modulating activity, the method comprising the use of a cell of claim 24.

45. (new) A method for identifying a substance having ion-channel modulating activity, the method comprising the use of a transgenic organism of claim 32.

REMARKS

Reconsideration is requested.

The claims have been amended to delete improper multiple dependencies, to advance prosecution, without prejudice. Claims 7, 8, 9, 16-20, 31-35, 38 and 39 may now be examined.

The applicants elect, with traverse, the subject matter of the Examiner's Group II (nucleic acids) for further prosecution in the above. The restriction requirement should be withdrawn and reconsideration and withdrawal of the restriction requirement are